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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 005369

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SUBJECT: ITALY ON EU-AFRICA TROIKA: PEACE AND SECURITY,
ZIMBABWE, AND EU-AF DIALOGUE

REF: BRUSSELS 05330

CLASSIFIED BY: POL M/C T. COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: THE RECENT EU-AFRICA MINISTERIAL TROIKA IDENTIFIED PEACE AND SECURITY AS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY FOR THE AFRICAN CONTINENT, COMMITTED TO THE CREATION OF A PEACE SUPPORT OPERATION FACILITY (PSOF), WELCOMED THE RE-INITIATION OF THE EU-ZIMBABWE DIALOGUE AND COMMITTED BOTH SIDES TO IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EU-AFRICA DIALOGUE. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) BRUNO CABRAS, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REVIEWED HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RECENT EU-AFRICA MINISTERIAL TROIKA WHICH HE CHAIRED NOVEMBER 10 IN ROME. HE STATED THAT THE TROIKA IDENTIFIED PEACE AND SECURITY AS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY FOR THE CONTINENT AND THAT BOTH PARTIES AGREED THAT WITHOUT PEACE AND SECURITY THERE WOULD NOT BE ANY MEANINGFUL DEVELOPMENT REGARDLESS OF THE AMOUNT OF AID AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED. CABRAS STATED THAT AFRICANS ARE DETERMINED AND WILLING TO MANAGE THEIR OWN CRISES BUT NEED A SUPPORT STRUCTURE TO HELP THEM SUCCEED. TO THIS END, THE EU WILL ALLOCATE 250 MILLION EURO FROM ITS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE BUDGET TO SET UP A PEACE SUPPORT OPERATION FACILITY (PSOF) WHICH WILL SERVE AS A FUNDING SOURCE FOR TRAINING, MEDIATION, PEACEKEEPING AND POST-CONFLICT OPERATIONS CONDUCTED BY AFRICAN FORCES. CABRAS BELIEVES THIS INITIATIVE WILL STRENGTHEN AFRICAN CAPACITIES AND PROVIDE GREATER FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS WHEN SECURITY ISSUES ARISE. FURTHERMORE, THE FACILITY WILL PROVIDE A GREATER SENSE OF OWNERSHIP, SOLIDARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY SINCE IT WOULD BE MANAGED BY AFRICANS IN CONSULTATION WITH THE EU AND THE UN. BOTH SIDES AGREED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THIS INITIATIVE AND THE EU COUNCIL APPROVED CREATION OF THE PSOF AT THE NOVEMBER 17 GAERC.

3. (C) CABRAS REPORTED THAT AFTER BEING TEMPORARILY HALTED, THE EU-ZIMBABWE DIALOGUE WILL CONTINUE UNDER THE EU-SADC FRAMEWORK. HE STATED THAT THE EU ARTICULATED ITS POSITION IN WRITING TO SADC AND THE AU ESTABLISHING CLEAR BENCHMARKS AND CALLING FOR A CHANGE IN POLICIES IN HARARE TO MEET THESE GOALS. THE AFRICANS WELCOMED THE EU'S EFFORTS EXPRESSING A NEED FOR THE EU-AFRICA SUMMIT TO CONVENE EARLIER IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THE WORSENING SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE. CABRAS STATED THAT THE EU'S GOAL IS TO MAINTAIN THE DIALOGUE OPEN AND TO PURSUE A CHANGE OF POLICIES NOT A CHANGE OF REGIME. CABRAS ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR MEDIA FREEDOMS AND THE FOOD CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE (REFTEL).

4. (C) BOTH SIDES ARE COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EU-AFRICA DIALOGUE BY ENSURING A BALANCE BETWEEN POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES AND REACHING COMMON UNDERSTANDING ON ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST. TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE PARTIES AGREED TO WORK THROUGH THE NEPAD FRAMEWORK AND FOCUS ISSUES INTO FOUR GROUPS OF COMMON PRIORITIES: PEACE AND SECURITY, GOVERNANCE, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. CABRAS REPORTED THAT THE PRIORITY ITEMS FOR THE NEXT OFFICIALS LEVEL TROIKA TO BE HELD IN IRELAND IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2004 ARE: AID, AFRICAN EXTERNAL DEBT, MIGRATION AND CULTURAL GOODS RETURN. IN CLOSING, CABRAS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT COMMITMENTS MADE BY INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS IN PREVIOUS MEETINGS (MONTERREY, JOHANNESBURG, DURBAN, MILLENNIUM GOAL) WERE NOT BEING HONORED AND THUS COULD REDUCE CREDIBILITY AND LEAD TO FURTHER POLITICAL CRISIS ON THE CONTINENT.
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